Sapphire and Steel

(Six Half-Hour Episodes)

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"SAPPHIRE AND STEEL" – SERIES FIVE

(Six half-hour episodes)

Ten people are present at a country house party. And then there are nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five. Strange death follow one after the other.

The latest story in the "SAPPHIRE AND STEEL" series, consisting of six half-hour episodes, is unlike any of its predecessors. Written by two newcomers to the series, Don Houghton and Anthony Read, it breaks new ground.

The format is an intriguing one, very much in the style of murders-in-a-country-house which might have been written in the 1930's by Agatha Christie or Dorothy L. Sayers. But with a startling difference. Time is up to its tricks again. Paraphrasing "Ten Little Indians", the victims meet their end, one by one — and the bodies disappear in mysterious fashion. And, of course, there is the traditional butler.

David McCallum and Joanna Lumley continue as the agents from another dimension, with Miss Lumley's Sapphire still possessing strange powers and senses, her eyes turning blue as she switches to other time periods. Shaun O'Riordan is the producer/director and David Reid the executive producer.

The setting is a large country house; the owner, Lord Mullrine, played by Davy Kaye. To celebrate his company's 50th anniversary, he holds a party in the atmosphere of the day on which the company was founded, 21st June, 1930. Everything, with the exception of the modern office, is put back to exactly as it was on that date — in every possible way, from decor to an old radio set, even pre-automatic 'phones — and this provides Time with the opportunity to break through the delicate fabric of the Present. The years actually roll back to 1930. The 1980's are in the distant future.

Sapphire and Steel's new assignment begins when they are invited to the party, their task to prevent Time wreaking terrible devastation throughout the world.

Mullrine's partner, George McDee, died just one day after the company was launched. He was working on a secret experiment. Sapphire and Steel soon realise that if Time can use its powers to change the sequence of events and prevent McDee's death, he will be able to complete the experiment that will unleash unimaginable horror.

Stephen MacDonald portrays George McDee, the ghost that becomes a living person. Patience Collier is Mullrine's slightly younger sister Emma, now in her seventies and, fifty years back, in love with George McDee. When it becomes evident that McDee had

died from anything but natural causes, she is one of the suspects. Another suspect is his jealous wife Felicity, played by Nan Munro.

The murders begin soon after the guests arrive. The first two victims are Tony Purcell (Christopher Bramwell), son of the company's banker, and his dollybird girlfriend Veronica (Debbie Farrington). It is significant that they are the two youngest members of the party. The other victims are claimed in age order: George McDee's grandson (Jeremy Child); 40-year-old executive Felix Harborough (Jeffrey Wickham) and his wife Annabelle (Jennie Stoller).

Each dies in a different way . . . and in each case the bodies disappear completely. For very logical reasons, too, as it turns out.

Though the remaining guests are upset by the series of deaths, Sapphire and Steel are not concerned with this aspect of their latest assignment. When they realise that, in regressing the atmosphere to 1930, Mullrine has inadvertently let Time break through, they have to pit themselves against the mysterious power and, instead of preventing further murders, have to strive to ensure that the killing which took place on 22nd June, 1930, is repeated. They have to thwart Time in its efforts to keep McDee alive . . .

The two other members of the cast are Peter Laird as the butler and Patricia Shakesby as Lord Mullrine's secretary who, because she is not at the party and is working in the present-day office, is the only one not to find herself regressed to 1930.

"SAPPHIRE AND STEEL" is an ATV Network production, distributed by ITC Entertainment.

THE CAST:–

Steel	DAVID McCALLUM
Sapphire	JOANNA LUMLEY
Emma Mullrine	PATIENCE COLLIER
Felicity McDee	NAN MUNRO
Lord Mullrine	DAVY KAYE
Felix Harborough	JEFFREY WICKHAM
Howard McDee	JEREMY CHILD
Annabelle Harborough	JENNIE STOLLER
Greville	PETER LAIRD
George McDee	STEPHEN MACDONALD
Anne Shaw	PATRICIA SHAKESBY
Tony Purnell	CHRISTOPHER BRAMWELL
Veronica Blamey	DEBBIE FARRINGTON

Executive Producer:	DAVID REID
Producer/Director:	SHAUN O'RIORDAN
Writers:	DON HOUGHTON and ANTHONY READ
Designer:	SU CHASES

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SYNOPSIS

A wealthy industrialist holds a house party to celebrate his company's 50th anniversary. Everything is turned back to the atmosphere of 1930, the year the company was founded. But has he inadvertently set in motion a time warp? Sapphire and Steel have a new assignment . . .

Everything has been set back to 21st June, 1930, the date on which the now wealthy industrialist Lord Mullrine and his long-deceased partner George McDee founded their organisation. The occasion is the company's 50th anniversary, a house party hosted by the 76-year-old Mullrine and his fluttery, slightly younger sister Emma.

The house has been transformed, except for an ultra-modern office, the nerve centre of the company, in which Mullrine's pretty secretary Anne Shaw is working. A green baize door separates the past from the present. The house, apart from the office, is now exactly as it was in 1930 — in its decor, furnishings, even to an old radio set, magazines and newspapers of that date. All the guests have been told to dress in 1930 fashions, and as they arrive they are ceremoniously announced by the suave and correct 68-year-old butler Greville.

Felix Harborough, a 40-year-old executive on the company's board, and his smartly elegant wife Annabelle are the first to be announced. They are followed by George McDee's 30-year-old grandson Howard and his grandmother Felicity McDee, George McDee's widow. A picture of George McDee himself, who died just one day after the start of the company in 1930, surveys the scene, with mourning crepe around the frame.

The atmosphere is right in every detail.

This is the setting in which Sapphire and Steel find themselves, correctly attired in 1930's clothes as requested, but wondering why they have been sent here. The invitation is in Lord Mullrine's name, but he has no idea who they are. Sapphire can immediately sense the strangeness of the house: "There's something wrong . . .something evil." Steel agrees: "Yes. The time continuum is warping . . . there is a time tear."

It is ominous that it should be the Summer Solstice, a date over which we have little control over our fate.

Though midsummer, darkness seems to be setting in early and a chill atmosphere permeates the whole place. More than anything else, it is the green door that fascinates Sapphire and Steel — a door that separates 1980 from 1930. Sapphire tries to probe what lies behind it, but there is a barrier . . . a blue swirling mist, as if a strange chasm existed. A moving vacuum: "Like the cold fires of Hell." She moves slowly towards the door, as if in a dream . . .

SYNOPSIS

More guests arrive at the Mullrine International company's 50th anniversary party. The atmosphere becomes even more eerie. A dead man reappears . . . and death lies ahead for one of the guests.

Steel is alarmed as he sees Sapphire drawn towards the green baize door, but she stops when she hears his warning call. Steel is certain that whatever it is that has gripped her is a time warp . . . a fissure into eternity. There is a strong alien force here, and it's very evil.

The moment has passed. More guests arrive. They are Tony Purnell, son of Mullrine International's merchant banker, and his girlfriend Veronica Blamey, an attractive dollybird who, Sapphire senses, is in love with Tony for himself, not his money; but Veronica's feelings are not reciprocated. For Tony, there is someone else. Sapphire's intuition has also told her that Mullrine's sister Emma is a lonely old woman carrying a torch for a lost love for the past 50 years.

Outside, it is getting darker, with a thick fog developing.

The party is now in full swing, the guests dancing to 1930 music from the old radio. A birthday cake is brought in. Smoke wafts from the 50 candles, mingling with thin wisps of fog coming through the bottom half of the hall door. Steel is perturbed when he sees the cake. It is a time paradox. If the "present" is 1930, a 50th anniversary marking on a cake would put the date of the company's foundation as 1890. Mullrine has slipped up and that could be dangerous.

Before the cake is cut, Mullrine asks the guests to toast the memory of his old partner George McDee. As they do so, the candles on the cake disappear — and then, standing in front of the dead man's portrait, is the gaunt, angular figure of George McDee himself, aged about 40 and dressed in 1930 period clothes. Emma Mullrine faints. Felicity McDee moves across to the man who had been her husband, but to her bewilderment he tries to ignore her, denying that he is her husband and saying he has never seen her before. She's 50 years too old to be his wife.

Sapphire and Steel exchange glances and Sapphire whispers: "He's not a ghost. He's very much alive . . . but he's due to die tomorrow, 22nd June, 1930." It is a time slip, confirmed when McDee takes his grandson to be his own son. He then

announces that he is going into his laboratory and stalks towards the baize door. But it is now a normal wooden door. McDee slams it behind him.

Felicity McDee is in a state of shock and her mind appears to be wandering. She insists on calling her grandson Howard by his father's name of Malcolm.

The party continues and, in the spirit of 1930, a game of "sardines" is played. Tony Purnell's girlfriend Veronica is sent off to hide. The search for her begins. And Annabelle Harborough is the one to find her in a cupboard under the stairs. Veronica is dead.

SYNOPSIS

A girl has been found dead during a game of "sardines" at the party celebrating Mullrine International's 50th anniversary. What has this to do with the time warp Sapphire and Steel have sensed? Events take even stranger turns . . .

Veronica Blamey has been murdered with a carving knife which, the butler Greville says, had been removed from the dinner table. The body is covered with a white sheet while efforts are made, in vain, to telephone the police. The house seems to be cut off from the outside world.

Felicity McDee looks at the shrouded figure on the floor and exclaims: "Ten Little Indians . . . then there were nine." There were ten when the party began, and the significance of her reference is not lost on Sapphire and Steel. What has happened is in the best traditions of a 1930's who-dun-it. A country house murder mystery. It might have been written by Agatha Christie or Dorothy L. Sayers.

But where is Tony Purnell, who brought Veronica with him? He is missing. The mystery is deepening. Steel wonders what is so significant about 1930. What happened in this house fifty years ago?

He sees Tony Purnell's champagne glass and wonders if a trace of his "id" is still clinging to it. Can Sapphire track back on Tony's movements? Her eyes glow blue and Steel receives the information he needs. Tony was in this house three days ago — in 1980. He came to see Mullrine's secretary Anne Shaw. She was angry with him, jealous because she knows all about Veronica. He reassures her: he will get rid of Veronica. And now Veronica is dead . . .

The glass shatters.

Other strange things are happening. Memories seem to be confused and Steel explains that they are living in a vortex — in the middle of a paradox. And then, when the subject of Veronica's death is brought up, Steel asks Greville to remove the sheet. The body has gone. Only the knife remains.

George McDee, it seems, is still at work in his laboratory and Sapphire uses her powers to watch him. He is working on an experiment which is absorbing all his

attention — and Sapphire can sense evil. Something fearful.

Outside, the weather is getting worse. Greville is in the dining-room, ensuring that everything is correct for dinner, when a dishevelled and terrified Tony Purnell emerges from the window curtains. He calls to Greville to find Sapphire and Steel, then sits at the table with his head buried in his hands. A few moments later, he is dead. A still smoking revolver is opposite him — out of his reach.

And then there were eight . . .

SYNOPSIS

Two house party guests have been killed. Who will be the next? But this is no traditional murder drama. Sapphire and Steel are no ordinary detectives . . .

Why was Tony Purnell shot? Who murdered him — another guest or some unknown force? Is his killing linked with Lord Mullrine's secretary Anne Shaw? And what had made him so terrified?

Steel is convinced, though, that motives are not important. It is all part of a time distort. Links are needed, and those links are becoming apparent. Tony Purnell and Veronica were the two youngest members of the party. If this is significant, there is a pointer to who will be the next victim — the next youngest guest.

The atmosphere is becoming increasingly ominous. A weird shrieking noise fills the dining-room, and as they stare at Tony's body its clothes disintegrate as if with age. Then the body disappears.

It is a time paradox. Time has now regressed in fact, and not make-believe, to 1930.

Developments are rapid and there are opinions put forward that Howard McDee would have had a motive for murdering Tony. Steel dismisses the idea. He doesn't believe Howard could have committed the crime, let alone make the clothes gradually age and the body disappear. A tremendously powerful force is at work and Steel wonders if there was an uncontrollable disaster very close to the Summer Solstice of 1930.

Despite the tragedies, all sit down to dinner. Still in her 1980 office, Anne Shaw finds everything going berserk. The, when George McDee returns to the dining-room, his presence is accepted by all without comment except for his grandson Howard, who picks up a glass and offers a toast: "To the millions they will make out of other people's pain and misery. To our hosts — charlatans and purveyors of blood!"

Then he drops dead. Poisoned. And now there are seven......

Episode Five (by Anthony Read)

SYNOPSIS

Three deaths have taken place. Why? For Sapphire and Steel, the present task is to prevent Time from stopping, rather than causing, another death . . . the death of George McDee. If he is allowed to live, it will be a tragedy for the whole world.

Howard McDee's dead body also disappears, but this is no surprise to Sapphire and Steel. No-one born after 1930 would be alive in that year, and Howard, like the others who have been removed, would not have existed.

But what is Time trying to do? Sapphire and Steel are still mystified. The block is getting stronger and the time warp is getting even stranger. The butler, Greville, belongs to 1980, yet he keeps calling his employer "Mr. Mullrine" — which, of course, he was in 1930.

Steel warns Felix and Annabelle that they are in danger. They are now the youngest members of the party . . . and Annabelle is the next to perish. As she touches a door handle, a blue flash envelops her. And then there were six!

They are in 1930, but Steel is able to return to 1980 by going into Anne Shaw's office. He is then able to tell Sapphire that he has found something. It's a battle of wits. Some things are becoming clearer, one of the most important being that Emma Mullrine was having an affaire with George McDee.

Sapphire and Steel will themselves into the future and persuade Anne to check on the date of George McDee's death. Computerised records confirm that he died on 22nd June, 1930. And they find themselves staring at a shadowy figure of McDee swinging round angrily as Emma glides her way up behind him, putting her arms around him. As she does so, he knocks a test tube off the bench. It smashes on the floor. And Felix Harborough bursts into the 1980 office, covered in livid spots and sores and in agony. He collapses and dies immediately. Now there are five . . .

SYNOPSIS

Sapphire and Steel reach the climax of their investigations as they battle to prevent Time altering the course of events that took place fifty years ago.

Can the evil force with which Sapphire and Steel are battling be diverted from its efforts to change events that happened fifty years ago? George McDee died on 22nd June, 1930. Had he lived, his experiments would have resulted in the destruction of our planet. Sapphire and Steel are convinced now that McDee was murdered and that Time is trying to prevent that murder. Lord Mullrine's back-to-1930 part has presented that opportunity.

Whatever he is working on, George McDee is clearly nearing success.

Somehow, Sapphire and Steel have got to thwart Time's effort to keep him alive. It is vital that his death must be repeated in the same way as before, and at the same time. The two investigators keep a close watch and see Emma Mullrine entering McDee's laboratory, accusing him of tiring of her and demanding that he divorce his wife and marry her. They see her accusing her brother of making use of her . . . happy enough for her to make love to McDee while he was trying to persuade McDee to become his partner.

They see her go to Felicity McDee's room and tell her that she and her husband have become lovers and that he wants to marry her. Then they see a row between Mullrine and McDee, who wants to tear up their contract.

The events of that night are happening all over again, except for the death of George McDee. Who would have killed him? That event <u>must</u> be repeated, or else . . . Sapphire and Steel are baffled by false time tracks. Whether the killer was Mullrine, his sister or Felicity McDee doesn't matter. Time plays repeated tricks, striving to keep McDee alive. Sapphire and Steel strive equally desperately to ensure that his murder is repeated. They win, but the cause of McDee's death is a surprise to both of them . . .

The 1980 party in 1930 conditions is able to take place. Normally. With all the guests. Sapphire and Steel make their departure.